As per the Constitution of India, a person should have practised for at least 10 years before becoming a Judge of the High Court. Besides this, his academic attainments, standing and experience, specialisations, if any, competence in perception, ability to deal with complex legal problems, grasping capacity, Judicial Patential like maturity, temperament, capacity to persuade and to be persuaded, patience, fairness etc., Integrity and character and antecedents are kept in view while considering a person from the Bar.

After the Supreme Court Judgment of October 6, 1993 in the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record and Anr. *Vs.* Union of India, read with their Advisory Opinion of October 28, 1998, the entire process of initiation of proposal for appointment of a Judge of the High Court lies with the Chief Justice of that High Court. While making recommendations, the Chief Justices keep the above criterion in view.

Funds for computerization of courts

4187. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved a scheme with an outlay of Rs. 450 crores for computerization of 15,000 districts and subordinate courts in the country;

(b) to what extent will computerization help in reducing the backlog of cases;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is no link between such investments and benefits for poor litigants who have to wait for years outside courts;

(d) whether Government will develop an incentive based system of giving grants to courts and reduction of the backlog prevalent; and

(e) the steps proposed to help courts which decide cases efficiently?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (e) Government has approved a scheme for computerization of 13,348 District and subordinate courts in the country, the first phase of which is to be completed by 2007-08 at a cost of Rs. 442 crore. It is expected that the implementation of the scheme will reduce delays in disposal of cases, cut down process time and costs, cut down pendency, facilitate access of the

litigants to court orders, judgements and statement of witnesses, facilitate the judicial officers in their day to day functioning in justice delivery, ensure transparency in the system and generally benefit all stakeholders and enhance judicial productivity.

With a view to help courts to decide cases efficiently, the Government has taken a number of steps to off load the burden of couts due to backlog of cases by increasing the Judge strength from time to time. Besides this, measures such as grouping of cases involving common questions of law, constitution of specialised benches and organizing Lok Adalats at regular intervals, etc. have been taken. Alternative modes of disposal including mediation, negotiation and arbitration have been encouraged. Special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunal, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, Family Courts, Labour Courts, Consumer Courts etc. have been set up to expedite disposal of cases in different areas. Information technology is being used in generation of cause lists, providing information to the litigants/Advocates etc. for speedy disposal of cases. Fast Track Courts (FTC) for the disposal of long pending cases, particularly sessions cases and cases involving undertrials in jails have been set up. The Government has extended the term of existing 1562 Fast Track Courts, which were functional as on 31.3.2005, for another five years *i.e.* upto 31.3.2010 for clearing huge pendency of cases at District level.

The Code of Criminal Procedure has also been amended to introduce certain provisions for speedy disposal of cases. The concept of plea bargaining was also introduced.

There is no proposal under consideration of Government for developing an incentive based system of giving grants to courts for clearing backlog of cases.

Cases pending in courts

†4188. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and duration of pending cases regarding constitutional, civil, labour, election, writ petition, public interest litigation, special leave

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.